

**Subject:** Fwd: LA River path problem needing immediate attention  
**From:** Keith Banks <keith.banks@lacity.org>  
**Date:** 3/4/20, 10:05 AM  
**To:** Sarah Bell Sanitation <sarah.bell@lacity.org>  
**CC:** Jenny Portillo <jenny.m.portillo@lacity.org>

Hey Sarah how are you.

The County is doing a clean up on March 17th. But there is an encampment on the bike path behind 6831 Independence Ave in Canoga Park. The County assessed it as being on the bike path. Can you send a team to assist?

Best regards,

Keith Banks  
Winnetka Field Deputy  
Office of Councilmember Bob Blumenfield  
Los Angeles City Council, Third District  
19040 Vanowen Street, Reseda, CA 91335  
818.774.4330 Office | 818.756.9179 Fax | [blumenfield.lacity.org](mailto:blumenfield.lacity.org)  
Serving the San Fernando Valley Communities of Canoga Park, Reseda, Tarzana, Winnetka, and Woodland Hills.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jenny Portillo** <[jenny.m.portillo@lacity.org](mailto:jenny.m.portillo@lacity.org)>  
Date: Tue, Mar 3, 2020 at 3:31 PM  
Subject: Fwd: LA River path problem needing immediate attention  
To: Keith Banks <[keith.banks@lacity.org](mailto:keith.banks@lacity.org)>

Can you help with the river bike path. thank you.

Jenny M. Portillo,  
Senior Field Deputy  
Representative for Canoga Park  
Office of Councilmember Bob Blumenfield  
Los Angeles City Council, Third District  
19040 Vanowen Street, Reseda, CA 91335  
**818.774.4330** Office | **818.756.9179** Fax | [blumenfield.lacity.org](mailto:blumenfield.lacity.org)  
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Fwd: LA River path problem needing immediate a...

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**From:** Laren Bunker <[LBUNKER@dpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:LBUNKER@dpw.lacounty.gov)>  
**Date:** Tue, Mar 3, 2020 at 3:23 PM  
**Subject:** RE: LA River path problem needing immediate attention  
**To:** Jenny Portillo <[jenny.m.portillo@lacity.org](mailto:jenny.m.portillo@lacity.org)>  
**Cc:** Jonathan King <[JKING@dpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:JKING@dpw.lacounty.gov)>, Ronald Anderson <[RANDERSON@dpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:RANDERSON@dpw.lacounty.gov)>

Hi Jenny,

My staff went to the location and confirmed the encampment in question. We have reported it to LAHSA (attached email) for outreach and have posted for the cleanup operation which is expected to take place on or around March 17<sup>th</sup>. Just a side note, but the way the Use Agreement is written, the portions of the encampment (see photos in attached email) in the landscaped area would be our responsibility, but the one on the dirt path would be the City's responsibility. Feel free to address the one on the path if you would like it removed prior to our cleanup on March 17<sup>th</sup>. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Laren T. Bunker, P.E.  
Area Engineer  
Los Angeles County Public Works  
Office: (818) 896-0594

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**From:** Laren Bunker  
**Sent:** Monday, March 2, 2020 11:51 AM  
**To:** Jenny Portillo <[jenny.m.portillo@lacity.org](mailto:jenny.m.portillo@lacity.org)>  
**Cc:** Jonathan King <[JKING@dpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:JKING@dpw.lacounty.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: LA River path problem needing immediate attention

Hi Jenny,

This is part of the area with the new Use Agreement signed by the City that Michael and I met about last week. Based on the language of the agreement (that both of us agree is less than ideal), the actual maintenance obligation depends on whether the encampment is within the hachured area on the agreement, which is essentially divided between the future location of the bike path vs. landscaped area. The only way to know for sure would be to visit the area.

I can create a RFS to have my staff investigate at go from there, but if it falls within our jurisdiction, it will be a minimum of 14 days before we would be able to remove the

Fwd: LA River path problem needing immediate a...

encampment based on our established protocol.

I'll have my staff follow up with you once we know more. Please let me know if you have any questions in the meantime.

Thanks,

Laren T. Bunker, P.E.  
Area Engineer  
Los Angeles County Public Works  
Office: (818) 896-0594

**From:** Jenny Portillo <[jenny.m.portillo@lacity.org](mailto:jenny.m.portillo@lacity.org)>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 2, 2020 11:03 AM  
**To:** Laren Bunker <[LBUNKER@dpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:LBUNKER@dpw.lacounty.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: LA River path problem needing immediate attention

**CAUTION:** External Email. Proceed Responsibly.

The fence at 6831 Independence, doesn't that in the County side? Please advise

Jenny M. Portillo,  
Senior Field Deputy  
Representative for Canoga Park  
Office of Councilmember Bob Blumenfield  
Los Angeles City Council, Third District  
19040 Vanowen Street, Reseda, CA 91335  
818.774.4330 Office | 818.756.9179 Fax | [blumenfield.lacity.org](http://blumenfield.lacity.org)  
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From: **usm** <[emailusm@gmail.com](mailto:emailusm@gmail.com)>  
Date: Sat, Feb 29, 2020 at 6:06 PM  
Subject: Re: LA River path problem needing immediate attention  
To: Duc Dao <[34218@lapd.online](mailto:34218@lapd.online)>  
Cc: Laren Bunker <[LBUNKER@dpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:LBUNKER@dpw.lacounty.gov)>, Jose Moreno <[37748@lapd.online](mailto:37748@lapd.online)>, [jenny.m.portillo@lacity.org](mailto:jenny.m.portillo@lacity.org) <[jenny.m.portillo@lacity.org](mailto:jenny.m.portillo@lacity.org)>

Hi Officer Dao, and Mr Blumenfeld's office:

Some homeless people have put up a tent in the LA River literally right across from tenants' windows at 6831 Independence Ave. The tent is only approx 20 feet from tenants' windows and the homeless people have full view inside the windows, and also watch tenants entering and exiting the building as if they are scoping things out. Tenants are expressing fear and are feeling extremely uncomfortable about this homeless tent. Please immediately remove this tent. This is the second time, over the past couple of years, that homeless people have been brazen enough to do this in complete view. Your immediate attention to this matter is needed.

Tent location: when you enter the LA River pathway at the end of the Independence cul-de-sac (through the broken fence), turn left (west) and it's approximately half way down the side of the 6831 Independence apartment building.

There has been an increase in crime at the building in the approx past month-- one night someone stole the USPS intercom lock at the front main entry door, and another night someone blow-torched the coin box out of a washing machine in the laundry room. Nothing like this has happened in many years I've managed the building, now suddenly two things have happened in a short amount of time.

To Mr Blumenfeld's office: when are you going to finally close up the broken fence at the end of the cul-de-sac between the 6834 and 6831 Independence apartment buildings? I've requested this a number of times over the past couple of years. I was told that it would be discussed at "the next meeting," but nothing has been done about this. Closing up the broken fence, with material that will not be simply cut with wire cutters the next day, would greatly curtail the current increasing issues with crime and homeless, in that part of the LA River pathway, and also at the apartment buildings adjacent to the LA River at the end of the cul-de-sac, including the building I manage, 6831 Independence Ave, Canoga Park, 91303. Please finally do something about this before we have a major catastrophe.

Sincerely,

Ursula Margolis, apartment building manager, 6831 Independence Ave, Canoga Park CA 91303  
310-663-0029

On Sun, Jul 23, 2017 at 1:50 PM Duc Dao <[34218@lapd.online](mailto:34218@lapd.online)> wrote:

Thanks for calling me back and it was nice talking to you

Senior Lead Officer (SLO) P3+1, Duc "Duke" Dao  
Los Angeles Police Department  
Topanga Area Community Relations  
21501 Schoenborn Street  
Canoga Park, CA 91304  
Office: (818) 756-3074  
Cell: (818) 731-2570  
Email: [34218@lapd.online](mailto:34218@lapd.online)

Facebook: Duke Dao

"Great changes may not happen right away, but with effort even the difficult may become easy"- B. Blackman

**From:** usm [mailto:[emailusm@gmail.com](mailto:emailusm@gmail.com)]

**Sent:** Saturday, July 22, 2017 7:34 AM

**To:** Laren Bunker <[LBUNKER@dpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:LBUNKER@dpw.lacounty.gov)>  
**Cc:** Duc Dao <[34218@lapd.online](mailto:34218@lapd.online)>; Jose Moreno <[37748@lapd.online](mailto:37748@lapd.online)>;  
[jenny.m.portillo@lacity.org](mailto:jenny.m.portillo@lacity.org)  
**Subject:** Re: LA River path problem needing immediate attention

Hello Ms Bunker:

Thank you for your response. The chainlink fence at the end of Independence was closed up again yesterday (Fri) around noontime. Unfortunately it was cut open again some time before 5am this morning (Sat)--less than 24 hrs later. When I went to bed last night it was still closed, so it happened some time in the middle of the night, which is the usual pattern. It's now, again, wide open to entry & exit at all times of the day & night by gang members, drug addicts, homeless, etc. It needs to be closed again.

For the safety of the neighborhood area, this is a serious problem that needs attention as soon as possible. As mentioned in my last email, I suggest replacing the chainlink fence, as soon as is feasible, with a very tall, see-through-type 1"x1" iron post fence with curved spike tops, so that it can't be jumped. On a weekly basis, there's constantly couches & other furniture (tables, chairs) dumped at the end of the cul de sac next to the chainlink fence by the block's residents. If you don't make the fence tall enough and non-climbable, I could see all that dumped furniture being used as a 'stepping stone' to climb over whatever new fence you install, since, whoever is constantly cutting it open seems to be very determined to keep "claiming" that LA River path space area between Variel & DeSoto for whatever gang/drug criminality they're up to in the middle of the night. (Besides "claiming" that particular LA River path two-block area for their "activity" (including dangerous gun shooting), maybe they also use the path to surreptitiously move around to various parts of the city without notice, since, once inside the path, it goes under street bridges in a continual non-stop flow for many blocks, maybe miles, even with all the entry gates closed.)

Thank you,  
Ursula Schreck

On Thu, Jul 20, 2017 at 5:01 PM, Laren Bunker <[LBUNKER@dpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:LBUNKER@dpw.lacounty.gov)> wrote:

Hello Ms. Schreck,  
Thanks for letting me know of your concerns. I've asked my staff to look into this further and get back to me with their recommendations. I will keep you apprised of any action we take regarding upgrades at the site. In the meantime, we will continue to repair the fence as necessary.  
Please let me know if you have any further questions or concerns.  
Sincerely,

Laren T. Bunker, P.E.  
Senior Civil Engineer  
Los Angeles County Public Works  
Office: [\(818\) 896-0594](tel:(818)896-0594)

**From:** usm [mailto:[emailusm@gmail.com](mailto:emailusm@gmail.com)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 20, 2017 10:12 AM  
**To:** Laren Bunker <[LBUNKER@dpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:LBUNKER@dpw.lacounty.gov)>; [34218@lapd.online](mailto:34218@lapd.online);  
[37748@lapd.online](mailto:37748@lapd.online); [jenny.m.portillo@lacity.org](mailto:jenny.m.portillo@lacity.org)  
**Subject:** LA River path problem needing immediate attention

Hello Ms Bunker, Officer Dao, Officer Moreno, and Ms Portillo:

I'm just following up regarding Jenny Portillo's email to you on June 27, 2017. I had met with her at Bob Blumenfeld's office that day to tell her we have a real problem at the cul de sac area of Independence where it meets the LA River (Canoga Park 91303).

I live in an apartment building right next to the LA River, and we have graffiti, gun shooting, homeless individuals & encampments, drug addicts, and gang members that enter the LA River pathway and hang out and cause mayhem at all hours of the day and night. The issue is aggravated by people who surreptitiously cut open the chainlink fence at the end of the cul de sac (to enter & exit at will) on a regular basis, usually within 24 hrs after it is repaired and closed up. The criminality in the LA River path between Variel and De Soto has been ongoing for the past few years, and the problem is getting worse & worse.

Over the past few years, I've contacted (City?/LA River Commission) Carol Armstrong, Mike Affeldt and Kevin Kim (planner) on more than one occasion when the chainlink fence would get cut open. It would inevitably get closed up and then, as mentioned, within a day or two, it would be cut open again. We need to do something about this. The neighborhood has declined a lot over the past few years. I think the LA River Project is a wonderful project but I believe it's a contributing factor, if not *the* factor, to the decline of this particular neighborhood.

Due to the gunshots in the middle of the night along the LA River path (right next to the building I live in), the neighborhood is now becoming very unsafe. I've heard the gunshots now twice in the past approx month. The first time was a few nights before I went to Bob Blumenfeld's office and talked with Jenny Portillo about the situation (on June 27). The gunshots occurred approx 2am, moments after a police helicopter left (it had been circling around Variel/La River path area). Some of the gunshots were being fired down the LA River path from Variel toward DeSoto, and response gunshots were being fired down the LA River path from DeSoto toward Variel. (It sounded like the building I live in was about right in the middle of it.) The second time I heard gunshots was two nights ago, which occurred shortly after approx 5 minutes of a lot of loud yelling by a male who sounded in distress and sounded very out of breath. Also, approx mid-June, I (and at least one other person in the building, independently), contacted 911, who were very responsive and arrived very quickly, due to someone in the LA River path screaming & yelling for over an hour, sounding like he was being hit & tortured. It turns out he was on meth, and was hitting himself. (This was not the same voice--person-- I heard a few nights ago.) Each of

these incidents was loud and disruptive enough to cause me to wake up from a deep sleep in the middle of the night. (I had contacted and left a few voicemessages for Officer Dao regarding the first gunshots incident & the meth addict incident, but he was on vacation. Thank you, Officer Dao, for your voicemail, approx one week ago, following up on my calls to you, after your return from vacation.)

A few months back, we had a growing homeless encampment living in the LA River path area that abutted up against the property wall of the building I live in. They were camping and cooking on open fire (with trees & dried out grass and brush all around). I could smell the fumes coming into my apartment through an open window. I was very concerned about fires getting started and the LA River path dried brush igniting and endangering the lives of residents in the apartment buildings along the path. I had contacted Officer Dao and shortly thereafter the encampment was dismantled (thank you Officer Dao for your quick response). Homeless have not returned at the moment, probably due to the 100-112 degrees summer days Canoga Park has been experiencing, but I'm concerned they'll return again when the weather cools down a few months from now and cause possible danger with the open-fire cooking in the dried-out brush again. [A fire had been randomly started with a large piece of cardboard last summer in the LA River path by a couple of (non-homeless) men in their late teens/early 20s right next to some trees and dried brush. It was dangerously close to a neighboring apartment building. Luckily someone driving over the LA River bridge on DeSoto saw the smoke, called the Fire Dept and the Fire Dept responded quickly enough to put it out before the apartment building caught fire.]

Over the past two years, I have requested of the LA River Project/Commission (the people mentioned above) that a better fence be installed at the end of Independence Ave, that can't be cut open. This would help with the problem immensely because then you could control the entry/exit into the LA River at different hours via the gates into the LA River pathway at Variel and DeSoto (which I believe was probably the original idea, right?). As it is now, gang members, drug addicts and others can enter and exit at will, through the cut open hole in the chainlink fence at the cul de sac of Independence Ave, whether or not those gates are closed.

The day after Jenny Portillo sent her June 27 email to you, the fence was repaired shut and the graffiti was removed. Thank you, Ms Bunker, for your quick response, but, unfortunately, as usual, it was cut back open within 24 hrs. Two days ago, the city/county(?) LA River maintenance crew repaired it shut again (it seems they come out approx once a month for routine maintenance), and, again, within 24 hrs it was cut back open. It is now, again, wide open to entry and exit.

What do we need to do to get this resolved? I had originally suggested, on various occasions over the past few years, to the people mentioned in the above third paragraph, that the chainlink fence be replaced with a concrete block wall, but, on thinking it over, I now realize, that would just make more 'wall space' for graffiti and

hide gang activity, and would also be easy to jump, so I now think it would be better to put in a tall iron-post/slat fence with curves at top so no one can jump it. That would also help deter more criminality since one could see into the River Path area, not allowing for 'hiding places.'

When can we get something done about this?

I'm happy to talk further with anyone about this, but please contact me only via email or phone (below). Due to the nature of the neighborhood and my concern about retaliation, I don't want uniformed police or other 'official'-looking people coming to our building to talk with me because I believe the buildings across the street, and next to us, house some of the people causing mayhem in the River Path area, and possibly the people who keep cutting the fence open.

Sincerely,  
Ursula Schreck  
6831 Independence Ave  
[310-663-0029](tel:310-663-0029)

--  
Ursula

*Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.* - Soren Kierkegaard

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Ursula

*Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.* - Soren Kierkegaard

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Ursula

*Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.* - Soren Kierkegaard

— <5 Encampments- Initiating Protocol- LA River- Independence Ave..eml —

**Subject:** <5 Encampments- Initiating Protocol- LA River- Independence Ave.

**From:** Sima Topchyan <STopchyan@dpw.lacounty.gov>

**Date:** 3/3/20, 2:43 PM

**To:** Kimberly Barnette <kbarnette@lahsa.org>, Brenda Gonzalez  
<bgonzalez@lahsa.org>, Nathaniel VerGow <nvergow@lahsa.org>

**CC:** Ronald Anderson <RANDERSON@dpw.lacounty.gov>, Melania Gaboyan  
<mgaboyan@dpw.lacounty.gov>, Nareh Aboolian

<naboolian@dpw.lacounty.gov>, Michael Castillo <mcastillo@ceo.lacounty.gov>,

Steve Sheridan <SSHERIDA@dpw.lacounty.gov>, Scott Chaney  
<schaney@dpw.lacounty.gov>, Elizabeth Heger <eheger@lahsa.org>, "Kitchin II,  
William J." <WJKitchi@lasd.org>, "Deedrick, Geoffrey R." <grdeedri@lasd.org>,  
Laren Bunker <LBUNKER@dpw.lacounty.gov>, Jonathan King  
<J KING@dpw.lacounty.gov>, Susan Herman <SHerman@dpw.lacounty.gov>

Good afternoon,

A PEH encampment at LA River (a Flood Control District property) was discovered by our Public Works crew. The PEH encampment is located right-bank, upstream of Independence Ave. Please see attached photos and map. On Tuesday, March 3, 2020, we posted a 14-day notice of a cleanup. The cleanup date is scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 2020. Please let us know by Thursday, March 12, 2020, if you have any questions or concerns regarding the posting.

Location:  
LA River  
City of Los Angeles, Canoga Park  
SD3

Thank you,

Sima Topchyan  
Intermediate Typist Clerk  
Los Angeles County Public Works  
(818) 896-0594

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Fwd: LA River path problem needing immediate a...



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—IMG\_8842.JPG—

Fwd: LA River path problem needing immediate a...



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—IMG\_8840.JPG—

Fwd: LA River path problem needing immediate a...



— Attachments: —

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<5 Encampments- Initiating Protocol- LA River- Independence Ave..eml	19.6 MB
IMG_8844.JPG	2.7 MB
IMG_8843.JPG	2.7 MB
IMG_8842.JPG	2.3 MB
IMG_8841.JPG	3.2 MB
IMG_8840.JPG	2.5 MB
LA RIVER at Independence.pdf	1.0 MB
LA River at Independence Ave..doc	112 KB